

**E**RBERUS, the porter of helle, with his three hevedes, was caught and al abayst for the newe song; and the three goddesses, furies, and vengeresses of felonies, that tormenten and agasten the sowles by anoy, woxen sorwful and sory, & wepen teres for pitee. Tho ne was nat the heved of Ixion ytormented by the overthrowinge wheel; and Tantalus, that was destroyed by the woodnesse of longe thirst, despyseth the fodes to drinke; the fowl that bighte voltor, that eteth the stomak or the giser of Tityus, is so fulfild of his song that it nil eten ne tyren no more. At the laste the lord and iuge of sowles was mooved to misericordes and cryde, We ben overcomen, quod he; yive we to Orpheus his wyf to bere him companye; he hath wel ybought hir by his song and his ditee; but we wol putte a lawe in this, and covenaut in the yifte: that is to seyn, that, til he be out of helle, yif he loke behinde him, that his wyf shal comen

DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIE. BOOK IV. PROSE I.  
Hec cum Philosophia, dignitate vultus.

**A**N PHILOSO-  
PHYE hadde song-  
en softly and de-  
litably the forseide  
things, kepinge the  
dignitee of hir chere  
and the weighte of  
hir wordes, I thanne,  
that ne hadde nat al-  
outerly foryetten the  
wepinge and the mourninge that was set  
in myn herte, for brak the entencioun of hir  
that entendede yit to seyn some othere  
things. O, quod I, thou that art gyder-  
esse of verrey light; the things that thou  
hast seid me hidertoben so clere to me and  
so shewing by the devyne lookinge of  
hem, & by thy resouns, that they ne mow-  
en ben overcomen. And thilke things that  
thou toldest me, albeit so that I hadde  
whydom foryetten hem, for the sorwe of the  
wrong that hath ben don to me, yit nathe-  
les they ne weren nat aboutrely unknownen  
to me. But this same is, namely, a right  
greet cause of my sorwe, so as the gover-  
nour of thinges is good, yif that yveles  
mowen ben by any weyes; or elles yif that  
yveles passen withoute punisshinge. The  
whiche thing only, how worthy it is to ben  
wondred upon, thou considerest it wel thy-  
self certainly. But yit to this thing ther is  
yit another thing yjoined, more to ben  
wondred upon. for felonye is emperesse,  
and flourerth ful of riches; and vertu nis  
nat alonly withoute medes, but it is cast  
under & fortroden under the feet of felon-

ayein unto us.  
**W**hat is he that may yive a lawe to  
lovers? Love is a gretter lawe and a  
stronger to himself than any lawe  
and his wyf weren almost at the termes  
of the night, that is to seyn, at the laste  
ward on Eurydice his wyf, and loste hir,  
and was deed.

**T**HIS fable aperteineth to yow alle,  
whosoever desireth or seketh to  
lede his thought into the sovereyn  
day, that is to seyn, the cleernesse of so-  
vereyn good. for whoso that ever beset over-  
comen that he sicche his eye into the putte  
of helle, that is to seyn, whoso sette his  
thoughtes in erthely thinges, al that ever  
he hath drawn of the noble good celestial,  
he leseth it whan he loketh the helles, that  
is to seyn, into lowe thinges of the erthe.

Explicit Liber tercius.

ous folk; and it abyeth the torments in  
stede of wikkede felonies. Of alle whiche  
things ther nis no wight that may mer-  
veylen ynough, ne compleine, that swiche  
things ben don in the regne of God, that  
alle things woot & alle things may, and  
ne wole nat but only gode thinges.

**T**HANNE seyde she thus: Certes,  
quod she, that were a greet mer-  
veyle, & an embasshing withouten  
ende, and wel more horrible than alle mon-  
stres, yif it were as thou wene; that is to  
seyn, that in the right ordene hous of so  
mochel a fader & an ordenour of meyne,  
that the vessels that ben foule and vyle  
sholden ben honoured and heried, and the  
precious vessels sholden ben defouled &  
vyle; but it nis nat so, for yif tho thinges  
that I have concluded a litel herbyform ben  
kept hole & unraced, thou shalt wel knowe  
by the autoritee of God, of the whos  
regne I speke, that certes the gode folk  
ben alwey mighty, and shrewes ben alwey  
outcast and feble; ne the vyces ne ben nev-  
er withoute peyne, ne the vertues ne ben  
nat withoute mede; & that blisfulnesse  
comen alwey to goode folk, and infortune  
comth alwey to wikked folk. And thou  
shalt wel knowe many thinges of this  
kinde, that shollen cesen thy pleintes, and  
strengthen thee with stedefast sadnesse.  
And for thou hast seyn the forme of the  
verray blisfulnesse by me, that have why-  
lom shewed it thee, and thou hast knownen  
in whom blisfulnesse is yset, alle thinges  
ytreted that I trowe ben necessarie to put-  
ten forth, I shal shewe thee the wey that

shal bringen thee ayein unto thyn hous.  
And I shal sicchen fettheres in thy thought,  
by whiche it may aysen in heighte, so that,  
alle tribulacioun ydon away, thou, by my  
gydinge and by my path & by my sledes,  
shalt mowe retorne hool and sound into  
thy contree.

Metre I.

Sunt etenim pennae volucres mihi.

**H**AVE, forsothe, swifte fe-  
theres that surmounten the  
heighte of hevne. Whan the  
swifte thought bath clothed  
itself in tho fettheres, it de-  
spyseth the hateful erthes,  
and surmounteth the roundnesse of the  
grette ayr; and it seeth the cloudes behinde  
his bak; and passeth the heighte of the re-  
gion of the fyr, that eschaufeth by the  
swifte moevinge of the firmament, til that  
he aryseth him into the houses that beren  
the sterres, & joyneth his weyes with the  
sonne Phebus, and felawshipeth the wey  
of the olde colde Saturnus; & he ymaked  
a knight of the clere sterre; that is to seyn,  
that the thought is maked Goddes knight  
by the sekinge of trouthe to comen to the  
verray knowleche of God. And thilke  
thought renneth by the cercle of the sterres,  
in alle places theras the shyninge night is  
peinted; that is to seyn, the night that is  
cloudeles; for on nightes that ben cloude-  
les it semeth as the hevne were peinted  
with dyverse images of sterres. And  
whanne he hath ydoon ther ynough, he  
shal forleten the laste hevne, and he shal  
pressen & wenden on the bak of the swifte  
firmament, and he shal ben maked parfit  
of the worshipful light of God. Ther halt  
the lord of kinges the ceptre of his might,  
and atempteth the governements of the  
world, and the shyninge iuge of thinges,  
stable in himself, governeth the swifte  
cart or wayn, that is to seyn, the circular  
moevinge of the sonne. And yif thy wey  
ledeth thee ayein so that thou be brought  
thider, thanne wolt thou seye now that  
that is the contree that thou requerest, of  
whiche thou ne haddest no minde: But now  
it remembreth me wel, heer was I born, heer  
wol I faste my degree, heer wole I dwelle.  
But yif thee lyketh thanne to loken on the  
darknesse of the erthe that thou hast for-  
leten, thanne shalt thou seen that these  
felonous tyrants, that the wrecchede pe-  
ple dredeth, now shollen ben exyled fro  
thilke fayre contree.

Prose II.

Cum ego, Papae, inquam.

**T**HAN seyde I thus:  
Owh! I wondre me  
that thou bihest  
me so grette thing-  
es; ne I ne doute nat  
that thou ne mayst  
wel performe that  
thou bihest. But  
I preye thee only  
this, that thou ne  
tarye nat to telle me thilke thinges that  
thou hast moeved.

**F**IRST, quod she, thou most nedes  
knownen, that goode folk ben alwey  
stronge & mighty, & the shrewes  
ben feble and desert and naked of alle  
strengthes. And of these thinges, certes,  
everich of hem is declared and shewed by  
other. for so as good and yvel ben two  
contraries, yif so be that good be stede-  
fast, than sheweth the feblesse of yvel al  
openly; & yif thou knowe cleerly the feble-  
nesse of yvel, the stedefastnesse of good  
is knownen. But for as moche as the fey of  
my sentence shal be the more ferme and  
haboundaunt, I will gon by that oo wey  
and by that other; and I wole conferme the  
things that ben purposed, now on this  
syde and now on that syde. Two thinges  
ther ben in whiche the effect of alle the  
dedes of mankinde standeth, that is to  
seyn, wil and power; and yif that oon of  
these two fayleth, ther nis nothing that  
may be don. for yif that wil lakketh, ther  
nis no wight that undertaketh to don that  
he wol nat don; and yif power fayleth, the  
wil nis but in ydel and stant for naught.  
And therof cometh it, that yif thou see a  
wight that wolde geten that he may nat  
geten, thou mayst nat doute that power  
ne fayleth him to haven that he wolde.  
This is open and cleer, quod I; ne it may  
nat ben denyed in no manere. And yif  
thou see a wight, quod she, that hath doon  
that he wolde doon, thou nilt nat doute  
that he ne hath had power to don it? No,  
quod I. And in that that every wight may,  
in that men may holden him mighty; as who  
seyth, in so moche as man is mighty to don  
a thing, in so moche men halt him mighty;  
and in that that he ne may, in that men de-  
men him to be feble. I confesse it wel,  
quod I. Remembreth thee, quod she,  
that I have gadered & shewed by forseyde  
resouns that al the entencioun of the wil  
of mankinde, which that is lad by dyverse  
studies, hasteth to comen to blisfulnesse?  
It remembreth me wel, quod I, that it  
hath ben shewed. And recordeth thee  
nat thanne, quod she, that blisfulnesse is  
thilke same good that men requeren; so

Boethius de  
Consolatione  
Philosophie.  
Book IV.